

MONTANA  
Department of Public Health  
and Human Services

Section:  
REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT  
PROGRAMS

Subject:  
Refugee Social Services

**Supersedes:**      **New to the manual**

**References:**      45 CFR 400.140-156; ARM 37.74.101, .102

GENERAL RULE-- Refugee Social Services are provided via grant funding from the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). These funds are primarily for employability services designed to assist refugees in obtaining jobs within one year of becoming enrolled in services in order to obtain economic self-sufficiency. Social Services should continue to be provided after employment is obtained to help a refugee retain employment or move to a better job.

## **CATEGORIES OF SERVICE**

There are three basic categories of ORR funded refugee social services:

1. **Employment and Training (RET)** details provided in section TANF 1005-1- All individuals age 16 and older who are within the 60 month time limit should be referred to the RET contractor. However, only those receiving TANF or RCA are required to participate.
2. **Immigration Assistance (RIA)** (see page 2-4 of this manual section)
3. **Refugee Resettlement Case Management (RCM)** (see page 4-6 of this manual section.)

## **GOALS AND MEASURES**

Each resettlement service provider has established performance goals and reporting requirements. State Refugee Coordinator, Carol Carpenter, will monitor provider services each trimester for the following purposes:

1. assure performance and data accuracy;
2. provide technical assistance including current changes in state policy and procedure; and
3. remain cognizant to client characteristics and service needs.

## **SELF-SUFFICIENCY PLAN**

The local Office of Public Assistance is the point of entry for all refugee social service programs. The Eligibility Case Manager completes form HCS-801 "Resource Referral for Refugees" for both specialized services and community resources. This form is the first component of the refugee's self-sufficiency plan. The other components of the plan are the RET (Refugee Employment and Training) Employability Plan, Immigration Assistance Plan and Resettlement Plan.

Due to not having a local resettlement agency, not all secondary migrants will have all components of the self-sufficiency plan. The Self-Sufficiency Plan follows the flow of the refugee through the system.

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Women must have the same opportunity as men to participate in all funded services including employment services. Activity by gender is monitored through the service tracking spread sheet.

To the maximum extent possible, refugee-specific services will be provided by bicultural, bilingual men and women.

#### **PRIORITY OF SERVICE**

The following is the order of priority for use of Social Service funding.

1. Refugees who have been in the U.S. one year or less are the first priority for services.
2. Refugees who are receiving cash assistance, either RCA or TANF, and who have been in the U.S. three years or less.
3. Refugees who are unemployed but not necessarily receiving cash assistance who have been in the U.S. less than five years.
4. Employed refugees who need services to enhance employment or self-sufficiency and who have been in the country five years or less, are to be served last.

#### **REFUGEE IMMIGRATION ASSISTANCE (RIA)**

**Eligibility** – Any refugee who desires to become a citizen can request assistance through this program as long as they have not exhausted their 60 month time limit for services. Failure to comply with requirements to make progress toward citizenship or naturalization will result in the termination of services. There are not any income or resource limits for these services.

The Refugee Immigration Assistance (RIA) case manager/contractor shall develop a **written immigration assistance plan** for the individual. This plan must be shared with RET and RCM and the State Refugee Coordinator, Carol Carpenter. The plan must be detailed and include time lines for completing tasks.

The primary focus of the contractor is to provide citizenship and naturalization preparation services, including English language training and civics instruction to prepare refugees for citizenship, application assistance for adjustment to legal permanent resident status and citizenship status, assistance to disabled refugees in obtaining disability waivers from English and civics requirements for naturalization, and the provision of interpreter services for the citizenship interview.

While other individuals (notary publics, immigration consultants, RIA case managers) may assist refugees by filing in the blanks on pre-printed USCIS forms with information provided by the refugee, these individuals may not represent the refugee before USCIS. In addition, RIA case managers are

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required by law to disclose to USCIS their assistance in completing the section at the bottom of a petition or application concerning “preparer” of the form. A copy of USCIS the page titled “Finding Free Legal Advice” from the USCIS website [www.USCIS.gov](http://www.USCIS.gov) website and list of services provided by USCIS must be provided to each recipient of refugee immigration assistance.

NOTE: Please note the USCIS website extension is **.gov**. These are FREE services and material from the government. Do not use .com as it is a not free and is maintained by for profit entities. They will charge for the exact same forms available for free on on the **.gov** site.

The secondary focus is to provide assistance in obtaining Employment Authorization Documents (EADS). RSS funds cannot be used to pay fees associated with obtaining such documents.

All services provided by the contractor must be in harmony with other case managers to prevent a duplication of services. For example, ESL (English as a Second Language) classes can be provided by the RET, RIA or RCM case manager or by a third entity. If the ESL provider is not a contracted refugee case manager and there is a fee for the service, the RIA case manager can contact the RET case manager and request ESL be included in the employability plan.

Only MT Legal Services, LIRS (Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services) or other accredited representatives of a “Recognized Organization” can assist individuals with any of the following application processes:

1. **Adjustment of immigration status to permanent resident status, including;**
  - a. Assist with application for adjustment to legal permanent resident status (USCIS I-485),
  - b. Prepare and submit the following documents, photos and fees when they apply:
    - i. Immigration document related to medical examinations (USCIS I-693);
    - ii. Immigration document related to vaccination supplement;
    - iii. Fees for asylees. The Contractor is responsible for submitting this fee with the application packet, not paying this fee for the individual;
    - iv. Biographical information form (USCIS G325A);
    - v. Immigration photos. The Contractor is responsible for submitting this fee with the application packet, not paying this fee for the individual;
    - vi. Biometrics Fees. The Contractor is responsible for

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submitting this fee with the application packet, not paying this fee for the individual.

## 2. Securing U.S. citizen status.

**REPORTING:** A report of progress toward citizenship must be completed and submitted with each invoice requesting payment from the contract. Progress reports should be in narrative form and submitted to Carol Carpenter, State Refugee Coordinator, via e-mail ([ccarpenter@mt.gov](mailto:ccarpenter@mt.gov)) or hard copy mailing to PO Box 202925, Helena, MT 59620-2925 no later than February 15, June 15 and October 15 of each year. Refugees should be assured that details are not given to the federal entity.

### RESETTLEMENT CASE MGT (RCM)

**Eligibility-** Due to a limitation in federal funding refugees must meet the following in order to qualify for refugee resettlement case management.

- Entered the United States as a refugee or granted asylum by the United States within the last 60 months, **and**
- Become a resident of Montana for the first time within the last 24 months.

#### Services are intended to:

1. Support a critical need;
2. Promote the importance of family or individual's economic and self-sufficiency planning; and
3. Address the individual's/family's barriers to self-sufficiency including cultural and/or religious issues that affect resettlement into the community.

A Resettlement Plan (HCS-820) will be created by the resettlement case manager and shared with E & T and Immigration Assistance case managers and the State Refugee Coordinator. The Resettlement Plan must include the following:

1. **Confirmation of Medical Screenings**-All have been completed, as appropriate for each individual and address the requirements in TANF-1003-1 "Refugee Medical Screenings" and:
2. **Information and Referral Services**-Contractor must follow-up on all community service referrals given by OPA as documented on HCS-801 Resource Referral for Refugees and initiate additional referrals as the need arises. The contractor shall gather intake information, assess an individual's needs, identify local resources and ensure the individual is able to access services for which he or she is referred. Referral assistance typically occurs within the contractor's office. However, out of

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office assistance may be provided on a case-by-case basis. The contractor shall verify the refugee presented him/herself for services and if services were provided. Such documentation could include hard copy verification or confirmation phone contact. The RCM case file must contain hard copy verification or notation of phone contact names.

Referrals are categorized as follows:

- a) Elderly (AGA): Assist individuals 55 or older to enroll in programs specifically for seniors.
- b) Family Violence (FVA): Provide intake for family violence victims or batterers and assist individuals to enroll in or access services.
- c) Housing (HSA): Assist individuals to access homeless shelters, or make initial application for low income or subsidized public housing, or government funded financial assistance programs to maintain housing.
- d) Legal (LGA): Assist individuals to access legal assistance in areas of domestic violence; law enforcement; immigration; consumer protection; child support.
- e) Medical (MDA): Assist individuals to enroll in or access medically related services.
- f) Training (TSA): Assist individuals to enroll in certified training not funded by another source or provided by the RET (Refugee Employment and Training) case manager.
- g) Transportation (TRA): Assist disabled individuals with application or enrollment in ACCESS or Para-transit transportation or in requesting a vender payment for supportive service funds. (Also see supportive service requests.)
- h) Youth (YSA): Assist parents in conferences between school administrators and/or teachers to address specific problems or concerns with their children, or assist individuals to enroll children in appropriate programs.
- i) Short-term Mental Health Screening (MHA): Assist individuals with mental health intake and assessment for counseling needs. This service shall be provided by a certified mental health counselor.

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3. **Social Adjustment services** such as:

- a) Emergency services, as follows: Assessment and short-term counseling to persons or families in a perceived crisis; referral to appropriate resources; and the making of arrangements for necessary services.
- b) Health-related services, as follows: Information; referral to appropriate resources; assistance in scheduling appointments and obtaining services; and counseling to individuals or families to help them understand and identify their physical and mental health needs and maintain or improve their physical and mental health.
- c) Home management services, as follows: Formal or informal instruction to individuals or families in management of household budgets, home maintenance, nutrition, housing standards, tenants' rights, and other consumer education services.
- d) Translation & Interpreter services

**REPORTING:** A report of resettlement adjustment status for each household must be completed every trimester. Reports should be in narrative form and submitted to Carol Carpenter, State Refugee Coordinator, via e-mail ([ccarpenter@mt.gov](mailto:ccarpenter@mt.gov)) or hard copy mailing to PO Box 202925, Helena, MT 59620-2925 no later than February 15, June 15 and October 15 of each year.

**SUPPORTIVE  
SERVICES**

The following can be provided via a vendor payment as needed

- 1. Limited transportation assistance such as bus passes; and
- 2. Translation and interpreter services, when necessary

To request a supportive service vendor payment, the RET case manager should be contacted. If there is not a RET case manager for the case an e-mail request must be sent to the State Refugee Coordinator in Helena who will request payment from fiscal. Copies of the email request and documents verifying the need for the supportive service request (invoice and receipts) must be retained in the case file.

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